Message Text

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R 050805Z AUG 77 FM SECSTATE WASHDC TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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FOR BRDCO

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO CANBERRA, AUCKLAND BY POUCH, MELBOURNE, SUVA, SYDNEY, CINCPAC FROM WELLINGTON AUG 04:

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE WELLINGTON 03352

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, ELAB, NZ

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE ENGINEERS STRIKE AGAINST AIR

NEW ZEALAND

1. REPORTS FROM AUCKLAND, SUPPORTED BY MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT HERE, INDICATE POSSIBILITY OF A STRIKE BY THE ENGINEERS UNION AGAINST AIR NEW ZEALAND. IN NEGOTIATIONS WHICH BEGAN AUGUST 2, ENGINEERS APPARENTLY MAKING EXCEEDINGLY HIGH DEMANDS, INCLUDING AN 80 PERCENT TO 110 PERCENT RISE IN WAGES AND A 35 HOUR WEEK, WHICH AIR NEW ZEALAND WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO MEET, PARTICULARLY AS IT WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TRIGGER FURTHER DEMANDS FROM PILOTS AND OTHERS FOR PARITY INCREASES.

2. WHILE PRESIDENT OF ENGINEERS UNION ADVISED LABATT THAT CONDITIONS FOR STRIKE NOT CURRENTLY PRESENT AND WORK STOPPAGE OF ANY KIND CERTAINLY NOT IMMINENT, OTHERS CONNECTED WITH NEGOTIATIONS IN AUCKLAND BELIEVE CLIMATE FOR STRIKE

BY ENGINEERS MORE SERIOUS. STOPPAGE, SHOULD ONE OCCUR, WOULD LIKELY NOT COME BEFORE SEPTEMBER AND COULD RANGE FROM A TOKEN WALKOUT IN AUCKLAND ALONE TO A NATIONWIDE SHUTDOWN OF ALL INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TRAFFIC. MILITARY FLIGHTS VIA CHRISTCHURCH WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE AFFECTED UNLESS ENGINEERS WERE JOINED BY OTHER UNIONS SUCH AS THOSE WHICH DELIVER FUEL TO THE AIRPORT.

3. MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT IS FULLY AWARE OF USG INTEREST IN THIS MATTER AND HAS PROMISED TO KEEP US INFORMED. WE WILL BE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY HERE AND IN AUCKLAND AND WILL INFORM DEPARTMENT. SELDEN UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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